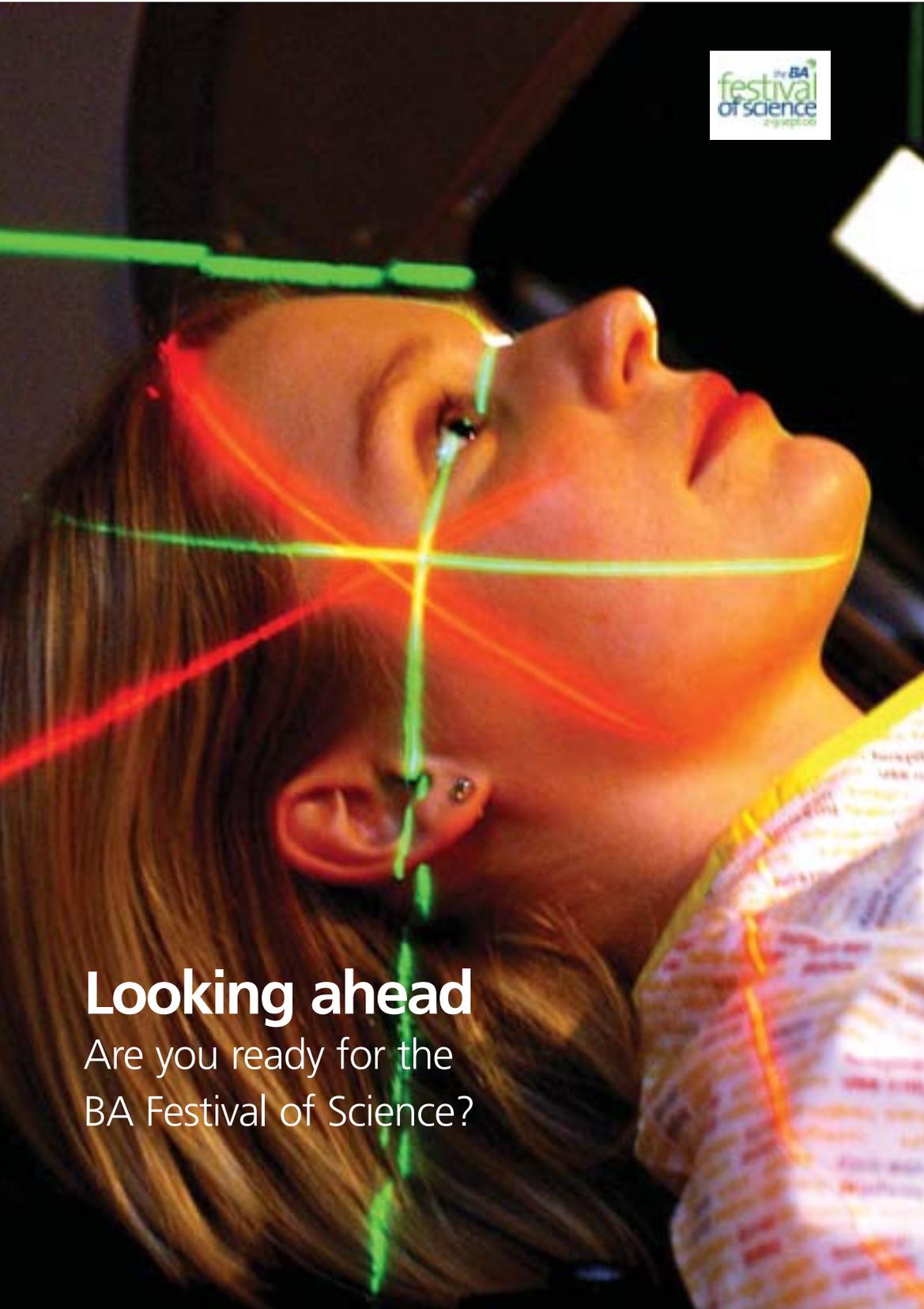


THE Pulse

Issue Number 26
August 2006

Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital
NHS Trust



PICTURE: SUNDAY TIMES



In safe hands
Reaching out with the neonatal nursing team

Viewpoint
How we could benefit from a hospital link programme



Summertime at NNUH
The team that keeps our gardens spic and span



Second chance
The nurses who qualified after going back to school

Looking ahead
Are you ready for the
BA Festival of Science?

Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital

Colney Lane, Norwich, Norfolk NR4 7UY
Tel: 01603 286286 www.nnuh.nhs.uk

Restaurant

West Atrium Level 1, open daily 7am-2.30am

Serco cafe bars

Outpatients West and Outpatients East, open Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm

WRVS coffee shop Plaza (East) open Mon-Fri 7am-7pm, weekends 11-5pm

WRVS shops East Atrium, open 8am-8pm Mon-Fri and 10am-6pm weekends

Plaza (West) open 7am-8pm Mon-Fri 8am-6pm weekends

The Stock Shop (ladies' fashions) open 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri and 12-5pm Saturdays

Serco helpdesk (for housekeeping, porters, catering and maintenance). Call ext. 3333

IT helpdesk (for tel./computer faults): Refer to the online call-logging facility on the intranet home page

Security Call ext. 5156 or 5656

Reception

East Atrium Level 1: ext. 5457 or 5458

West Atrium Level 1: ext. 5462 or 5463

Outpatients East Level 2: ext. 5474 or 5475

Outpatients West Level 2: ext. 5472

East Atrium Level 2: ext. 5461

Travel Office

Ext. 3666
For car parking permits, ID badges, keys to the cycle sheds, use of pool cars and the Trust bicycle. Also information about buses and other transport services

Bank

Cash dispensers in East Atrium Level 2 and in WRVS shop (west)

Chapel

Open to all. For details of services or to contact the Chaplains, call ext. 3470

Sir Thomas Browne Library

Mon, Wed, Thurs: 9am - 5.30pm,

Tues: 9am - 8pm, Fri: 9am - 5pm

Holiday Playscheme

At Blackdale Middle School during school holidays for the children of Trust staff.

Contact Christine McKenzie on ext. 2213

Cromer Hospital

Mill Road, Cromer NR27 OBQ

Tel: 01263 513571

Restaurant 7.45am-6.45pm

Other departments are based at:

- **Cotman Centre**, Colney Lane, Norwich Cellular Pathology, (Histopathology and Cytology), Radiology Academy

- **Norwich Community Hospital**, Bowthorpe Road, Norwich NR2 3TU, Tel: 01603 776776: Breast Screening, Health Records Library, Pain Management

- **Aldwych House**, Bethel Street, Norwich, NR2 1NR: Occupational Health (ext.3035): Outpatient Appointments, Training, Nursing Practice, Choice team, Norfolk Research Ethics Committee, some IT services

- **The Norwich Central Family Planning Clinic**, Grove Road, Norwich NR1 3RH. Tel: 01603 287345.

Labs are 'best in the UK'



Start of a new era for hospital science (from left): Richard Wood, David Hill, Carol Carter, Paul Forden and Julia Burton at the opening of the Cotman Centre

THE NEW CELLULAR pathology laboratories at the Cotman Centre were described as 'a fantastic success story' when they were officially opened in June.

Cytology manager Richard Wood said the collaborative project between NNUH and James Paget Hospital had created the best possible environment for hospital scientists: "Screening cytology samples from smear tests is an extremely difficult job – you need peace and quiet to give the work your full concentration. We are now screening around 51,000 samples a year and I honestly believe the conditions here at the Cotman Centre are the best in the country," he said.

Julia Burton, histopathology manager, said it was a common misconception that pathology was only about post mortems, when the bulk of the work involved tissue

from living patients. Only 19 per cent of tests result in a diagnosis of cancer; many others involve diseases of the skin, kidneys, liver and lungs.

Julia paid tribute to the teamwork required to process up to 46,000 tissue samples a year from all over Norfolk. She said the Cotman Centre had an important role to play in training junior doctors and creating a bank of fresh tissue for testing by drug companies (with consent from patients). It was also licensed to be one of the first testing centres for the breast cancer drug, Herceptin.

David Hill, chief executive of the James Paget Hospital, said the project was a brilliant example of "working together to make things happen. We are not talking about a Cinderella service here – without pathology we simply wouldn't have a hospital."

PHILLIP WINS THE GOOCH



The Benjamin Gooch Prize for best original research by a junior doctor has been won this year by Mr Phillip Johnston, a specialist registrar in

Orthopaedics, for his investigations into Dupuytren's Disease of the hand. Together with the colleagues at NNUH and the UEA, Mr Johnston is currently experimenting with diseased cells to investigate potential new medical treatments for the condition.

NOW IT'S DR THIRKETTLE

Ian Thirkettle has achieved a doctorate in Biomedical Science while working as a chief biomedical scientist in Haematology. Ian, a father of four whose wife Sarah is a sister in Oncology, completed his studies over four years with a distance learning course from



the University of Ulster. "My research was related to my work in the lab and that gave me the interest to keep on studying," he said.

BEWARE OF INFECTION

The infection control team at NNUH is preparing for its annual awareness week in October to inform staff and patients how they can help fight against infection. Events include a lunchtime quiz on infection control, a lecture by Dr Margaret Sillis on the risks of a flu epidemic, displays and advice about cleaning ties, stethoscopes and ID badges, and roadshows to inform staff about the DOH 'Saving Lives' initiative. Call ext. 5847 for more information.

Shorter stays will save costs

MANY OF US have been feeling the heat lately, in more ways than one. . .

Understandably there is a great deal of concern about the current financial crisis and what this will mean for our hospitals. The NHS has increased its spending considerably over recent years and maybe it is trying to buy more than it is able to pay for!

We are already recognised as an efficient hospital Trust; we run a tight ship and have always managed to balance our books – for this reason we face a harder task than many other NHS organisations in trying to make savings.

Having said that, the plans we are making now will stand us in good stead and should provide us with some much-needed stability in the years to come.

From our surveys, we know that patients prefer shorter hospital stays so we are trying to make this possible. We aim to switch 700 patients a year from in-patient to day-case procedures, with many more being admitted on the day of their surgery instead of the day before.

Our efforts to ensure that our beds are used appropriately have also had a positive impact. Medical patients now have access to tests and treatment more quickly in medical beds and this, in turn, is reducing their length of stay.

As we forge ahead with measures to increase our efficiency and cut costs, it is pleasing to note that our staff continue to get national recognition and that departments are continuing to innovate with projects to improve patient care.

I am hopeful that we will soon be able to finalise plans for our new hospital at Cromer. However, anyone who has ever bought a property will know that it takes time to negotiate a move successfully – when the move involves land for a brand new hospital the process is bound to be long and complicated – so watch this space.

Paul Forden

Chief Executive, Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital NHS Trust



HEALTH SECRETARY *Patricia Hewitt* paid a rare visit to NNUH in June at the request of MPs who had expressed concern about our budget shortfall for next year. After touring the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, she met with hospital staff and union representatives and acknowledged that “the people of Norfolk have one of the best hospitals in the country”. She promised to look again at the ‘market forces factor’ which leaves trusts in rural areas receiving less funding than those in more urban areas



NNUH leads on bowel screening

CENTRAL NORFOLK is one of the first areas of the country to offer older people a screening programme that could dramatically reduce deaths from bowel cancer. More than 65,000 people aged

between 60 and 69 will be invited by letter to take part in the programme over the next two years.

Dr Richard Tighe, NNUH consultant gastroenterologist and regional programme lead (pictured, left, with our bowel cancer screening team) said: “Many people are embarrassed to talk about their bowels but this enables them to take a test in privacy of their own homes, using a simple kit.”

Bowel cancer is the second most common cause of cancer deaths in the UK and around 80 per cent of sufferers are over 60. Although it affects more than one in 20 people in their lifetime, 90 per cent survive if it is caught early enough.

It’s expected to take about three years for screening to be phased in across the whole of England.



Bend it like Betty

BETTY TAYLOR, from Gorleston, suffered such horrific injuries in a head-on car crash in 1998 that her surgeons feared she would never walk again.

During 10 weeks in hospital, she spent four hours a day on a CPM (Continuous Passive Movement) machine to get her legs moving again.

She has since raised thousands of pounds for orthopaedic research and in June she presented a new CPM machine to help more patients benefit from this type of therapy.

“I owe so much to the team who helped me to recover after my accident that I’m happy to help them in any way I can,” she explained. Half the £2,600 cost of the



equipment was raised during a series of sixties nights organised by her husband, John, a bass guitarist with a band called The Strangers. The rest was raised by another grateful patient, Terry Wickham, who donated profits from the Golden Years evenings at the UEA.

LETTERS

WRITE TO SUE JONES, EDITOR, COMMUNICATIONS TEAM, NNUH

Proud to be a paediatric nurse

I HAVE often wanted to put into words what it's like to be a paediatric nurse. If asked what I do, I usually say I am a children's nurse, a reply that seems so inadequate.

This came home to me recently when I watched my eight-year-old son's class lead their school assembly. I am so used to seeing children attached to monitors and IV fluids that to see these youngsters so full of life was a real privilege and a vivid contrast to my work on Buxton Ward.

I see paediatric nurses as being at the centre of a large wheel – we are the children's advocate (and that of their families) while they are in our care.

We work with a great many health professionals, from play specialists and therapists to dietitians and social workers, supported by the housekeepers, cleaners, laboratory and admin staff who are all

essential to keep this big wheel turning.

All our patients are aged up to 16 and most stay for only a short while, although some are here for the longer term. It can be harrowing at times – when the children come from traumatic backgrounds or when we have to assist in procedures that are difficult for the child but necessary for their treatment.

However, it is extremely rewarding to see a child recover from an acute and severe illness and return home. Will they stay safe and well? We can only hope that they do.

I became a paediatric nurse because I wanted to make a difference. Together with my colleagues, I am here for the children of Norfolk – that is my definition of a paediatric nurse.

Karen Warminger, Buxton Ward



Keeping patients on the right path

MEET THE Patient Pathway Co-ordinators who have a key role in helping to reduce waiting times for cancer patients at NNUH. Funded by the Norfolk and Waveney Cancer network, the team is working hard to help us ensure that tests and investigations required to diagnose cancer are carried out in time to meet our targets, so that no cancer patients have to wait longer than 62 days from referral to treatment.

There may be many steps leading to a confirmation of cancer, including outpatient appointments, biopsies, X-rays, endoscopy and scans - all of which take time to organise. Our eight Patient Pathway Coordinators follow patients from the start of their clinical journey to their first treatment. They monitor

This is personal!

FROM SEPTEMBER we will have a new electronic system for keeping records on all our staff. Known as ESR (Electronic Staff Record), the system is being rolled out nationally to reduce paperwork and ensure staff records are accurate and accessible throughout the NHS.

The ESR will include salary and payroll information, together with information on training, qualifications, sickness absence, ethnic origin and disability, plus Criminal Records Bureau checks. It will be used for workforce planning and for managing staff rosters.

In future, you will be able to update your own details on the system but for now it's important that you return the form sent to you recently and let us know if your personal details change – a P3 form is available from the Workforce Information team on Level 4, West Block, NNUH.

FLYING GIFTS

Servicemen from RAF Coltishall's Supply Squadron dropped into A&E to present a cheque for £808.55 raised through charity quiz nights, car washes and a sponsored weight loss. The donation will be used to train A&E staff in advanced life support.

POWER TO THE PEDDLERS

Staff in Pathology entered two teams for this year's Norfolk 100 cycling event. Aptly named the 'Pathology Peddlers' (100 miles) and 'Bloody cyclists' (50 miles), they braved the heat to raise £1,000 for the British Heart Foundation.



AFTER numerous training events, the day of judgement arrived on what turned out to be the hottest day of the year. I have never seen so much Lycra in one place in all my life!

During the first five miles we were passed by lots of riders as we struggled up the 'mountains' of Mousehold Heath. We soon warmed up, but after a half-hour lunch stop at Felbrigg Hall, with 50 miles done, the hills got bigger and my will to live decreased. Sore butt, sore knees, sunburn and a raging thirst were the order of the day.

Coltishall passed in a blur (delirium).

Then on Salhouse road we spied a lady competitor with a shopping basket and quickened our pace – we couldn't be beaten by a lady with a shopping basket!

The organisers had one last trial for us: Grapes Hill. Not much cheering as we passed the finish line at 6.30pm; most of the spectators had got fed up and gone home. Even the beer tent was closed.

Would we do it again? Yes, despite the sunburn and sore legs, my colleagues are already planning to enter a team next year. Hopefully, I will be there too, helping to raise cash for a worthy cause.

David Walpole, Chief biomedical scientist



the results of any tests, supplying information to clinicians and admin staff to ensure that patients with a diagnosis of cancer are discussed at the relevant multi-disciplinary meetings and receive their treatment within the allotted time.

In June, thanks to teamwork throughout the Trust, we hit all our cancer targets for the first time.

By March 2008, the aim is that none of our patients will wait longer than 18 weeks from referral to treatment.

Does doctor really know best?

THE BA Festival of Science, the UK's largest celebration of science, is bringing more than 200 inspiring events to Norwich from 2 - 9 September.



NNUH staff and students are entitled to a free pass for all the main festival events, with topics ranging from body and mind to the universe, technology and the environment.

The doctor's role comes under the spotlight in two presentations at NNUH. *Surely doctor knows best?* invites the audience to take part in a discussion about cancer care, while the Royal College of Physicians asks *Do doctors have a future?* with panelists including the editor of *The Lancet* and the chair of the King's Fund. Other health topics include the latest developments in cancer treatments



and rheumatology, day surgery, and *What your blood says about you*.

Tickets and passes can be booked online at www.the-ba.net/festivalofscience, by phone on 0207 0194963, or at the Festival Box Office at the UEA during festival week.



Tribute to Sandy

CONGRATULATIONS to Sandy Lines, who has received a regional award for her voluntary work with UNKPA (the United Norwich Kidney Patients' Association) from the Nationwide Building Society.

The UNKPA charity, which is ten years old this year, gives kidney patients from NNUH a chance to go on holiday to Holland, with medical support from a local health centre in Port Zelande.

Sandy was nominated by the family of a patient and was presented with her award at Dunston Hall in July. To mark this year's anniversary she is organising two trips to the Netherlands, with extra financial support from NNUH endowments.

Pain relief gets under the skin

PATIENTS AT NNUH are benefiting from a groundbreaking technique to provide pain relief during operations. The technique involves identifying specific nerves under the skin, using ultrasound, and then blocking them with a local anaesthetic.

Consultant anaesthetist Dr Morne Wolmarans commented: "This is a safer, quicker and, over time, more cost-effective technique as it means patients recover more

quickly and their hospital stay is reduced."

One of the first to benefit from the new technique is Laura Ryan, 44, from

Lakenham, who underwent an operation for tennis elbow in July.

"They asked me before the operation if I was willing to give this new pain relief a go and I said I was. I'm glad I did as I really couldn't feel a thing. I would recommend this technique to anyone," she said.



PICTURE: COURTESY OF ARCHANT

WELCOME

...to the following consultants who have joined the Trust since 1 June 2006:

Mr Lennel Lutchman, orthopaedic surgeon specialising in keyhole spinal surgery, and **Dr Tim Gilbert**, cardiologist.

FAREWELL

...to the following long-serving staff who have recently left the Trust:

Janet Wells, theatre admin assistant
Garry Shayes, modernisation programme manager, and **Cynthia**

Bassett-Burr, staff nurse in theatres, all with 30 years' service; **Patricia Blenkiron**, staff nurse in theatres, after 28 years; **Glenda Taylor**, nursing assistant, after 27 years; **Janet Nash**, medical secretary at Cromer, **Janet Warrington**, deputy sister, and **Janet Appleton**, clerical officer, all with 26 years years' service; **Patricia Howard**, nursing assistant, and **Jeannette Taylor**, nurse team leader, both with 25 years' service; **Shirley Seeley**, nursing assistant, after 24 years.

IN SAFE HA

Our Neonatal Outreach Nurses have an important role in helping families to adapt to life with a premature baby.

Andrew Stronach finds out how they go about it

THE PROSPECT of becoming a parent can be daunting at the best of times. When a baby arrives up to 16 weeks early, the family may be faced with a huge amount to deal with both physically and emotionally.

Premature babies, termed neonates, often face a fight for survival and the odds can be stacked against them. Thankfully, the team in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) are skilled and experienced in supporting both babies and their parents at this crucial time.

As the babies stabilise and develop, they move from intensive care to high dependency and then to the special care baby unit – and it is here that our Neonatal Outreach nurses step in to bridge life in a hi-tech hospital unit with life at home.

With two outreach nurses (Carol Gubby and Charlotte Devereux) and six nursery nurses, the Neonatal Outreach team provides support for around 200 babies a year, whether in their own homes, in the special care baby unit or on Blakeney ward.

Charlotte Devereux was a relative latecomer to nurse training, at 25, having worked in respiratory medicine before becoming a neonatal nurse. She says the role offers the best of both worlds, combining acute hospital care and community nursing.

“Promoting an earlier discharge from hospital enables families to bond together sooner in their home environment, but this can be a daunting and stressful time for parents,” says Charlotte. “We aim to help with the practical skills required to care for

a preterm baby and offer as much support as they need.

The parents may be required to give tube feeds or administer oxygen at home, and all must be trained in resuscitating a baby.

Once a baby is ready to move to special care, the discharge planning process begins. A specialist registrar or advanced neonatal nurse practitioner will review the baby’s medical needs and progress is then reviewed on a daily basis, looking at

feeding, growth and general health. The health of the baby is also reviewed each week by consultant staff and a paediatric dietitian.

The outreach nurses will continue to see

babies up to six months old, and they also liaise with health visitors and the paediatric nursing team in the community.

Once at home, parents may telephone NICU at any time and, if necessary, they have immediate access to the Children’s Assessment Unit.

This help and support is invaluable for families who are making the difficult transition between hospital and home.

A key part of the job of preparing babies and parents for the big move from hospital to home is done by the nursery nurses in the low dependency area.

All six nursery nurses have either NNEB or BTec qualifications and their role is to help parents develop the skills they need to give them the confidence to care for their babies at home.

Nursery nurse Sarah Elliston has worked



The neonatal nursing team, from left: Jocelyn Baynes Clarke, Georgina Watts, Charlotte Devereux, Carol Gubby and Sarah Elliston

with neonatal babies at the N&N since 1974: “Our role is to teach the parents skills such as tube feeding, breastfeeding, resuscitation, temperature control – all the things they need to be able to do at home.”

The nursery nurses will be helping look after up to 17 babies who can be in the low dependency area for anything up to three months.

Georgina Watts is a relative newcomer to the unit and joined the team 18 months ago from a job in a day nursery: “It’s a big learning curve but very rewarding.”

And Jocelyn Baynes-Clarke said a highlight was always seeing their ‘babies’ come back: “It’s very satisfying to see them growing up and coming back to see us. It really does make a big difference to see them get on in life, and to know you’ve played a part in that.”

HANDS



PICTURES BY MICHAEL SMITH



“My little boy was having to fight for his life’



PICTURE: ARCHANT

LITTLE TITUS BRUNTON, from Dereham, weighed less than 2lb when he came into the world at just 25 weeks, after his mother, Terry, suffered a perforated appendix. Now 10 months old, he spent over 12 weeks on NICU (the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) and progress was not always smooth – a big setback came when his lungs collapsed. Happily, both baby and mother are now at home and doing well.

Terry commented: “When his lungs collapsed it really brought home to me that my little boy was fighting for his life. After he came out of hospital the outreach team were there whenever we needed them. He came home on oxygen and it was really as smooth a transition as anyone could hope for.”

Like many NICU parents, Titus’s bike-mad family were so grateful that they returned to the unit to express their thanks. They presented gifts of tiny clothes, special mattresses and books for the parents of other premature babies, leading a convoy of motorcycles to the hospital with Titus kitted out for the occasion in biker gear.

Meet the gardeners who keep our grounds looking their best all year round

REGULAR VISITORS to NNUH will notice that, despite the recent drought, the gardens have never looked better. Young trees and shrubs are beginning to mature and the borders are swathed in scented lavender and roses.

Although designed for easy maintenance, the grounds offer plenty for our gardeners to do. As well as the routine jobs of pruning, weeding and grass-cutting, they also keep the site clear of discarded litter, including a seemingly endless supply of cigarette butts.

In winter, strong winds and frost can wreak havoc with young saplings and create treacherous icy patches on the public pathways. Once again our gardeners step in where others fear to tread, sometimes starting work as early as 4am to grit the car parks and pavements, shovel away snow and ensure the paths and roads are safe to use.

After 28 years Alan Hales is our longest-serving gardener, having been employed at the old Colman Hospital and then the old N&N before moving to Colney. He now walks to work from

Catton – a journey that takes an hour and a half – to start the day litter-picking at 7.30.

“On a Monday morning we can fill up to five bags of litter between us, plus another 20 from the litter bins on site. It beats me how people can just drop their crisp packets, paper cups and drink cartons without putting them in the bins,” he says. “Even so, I love my job - when the sun is shining and I’m on the ride-on mower I

think it’s the best job in the world!”

Neil Smith also started at the old N&N after joining a youth training scheme 14 years ago and since then he has never taken a day off sick: “I love working outside – you get a lot of satisfaction out of seeing the gardens look nice,” he says.

Head gardener Paul Roberts studied horticulture after joining the gardening team at the old West Norwich Hospital 20 years ago. He admits he was apprehensive about the large, windswept site at Colney but is pleased that the trees and shrubs are now doing so well. “Some species struggle to survive in our soil but the silver birch trees are thriving and we are kept very busy pruning and tidying.

“Because we are so close to the farmers’ fields we have a lot of wildlife on this site. Last year there was a family of wagtails living in one of the courtyards and we are regularly visited by foxes and deer. Our biggest pests here are moles and ants.”

An important daily task for the team is to feed the fish in the ‘Friends’ Garden’, near the Colney Centre, which was created by Nottcutts with funding from the Friends of the Norwich Hospitals. Some of the fish survived the move from the old N&N site. “They swim to the surface as soon as they see our yellow jackets!”

Another job is to see that the helicopter pad is well trimmed and treated in winter with special ‘runway salt’, as the rock salt used elsewhere can be harmful if whipped up by the helicopter rotor blades.

GARDEN FACTS

- 15,000 trees and shrubs were planted at NNUH, including a those around the perimeter fence, before a single brick was laid on the 63-acre site
- Roundabouts on site at NNUH are looked after by our gardeners but the roundabout on Colney Lane is the responsibility of South Norfolk District Council.
- Special attention is given to trees and shrubs donated by wellwishers – including the newly created Ivy Child Rose garden near the West block



BORDER PATROL: *The gardeners at NNUH turn out in all weathers to keep our gardens clear of rubbish and looking good. Pictured, clockwise from left, are: Neil Smith, Jonathan Beall, head gardener Paul Roberts and Alan Hales (centre)*

Here comes



SUMMER

Second CHA

A man who was expelled from school at 15 and two mums in their mid-forties are among six seconded staff nurses who have graduated with diplomas or degrees from the UEA. All six were nursing auxiliaries before being seconded to the UEA, with financial backing from the Strategic Health Authority

OWEN WATKINSON, 28, was especially proud to achieve a diploma in nursing, having been expelled from school in Dereham at 15 for ‘messaging about’: “I did some really stupid things at school but a lot of it was frustration – I was later diagnosed as borderline dyslexic. I still find the academic work a struggle but it’s been worth it because I’m really enjoying my new responsibilities as a staff nurse.”

Owen joined a youth training scheme and was a care worker at St Andrews Hospital in Thorpe before becoming a nursing auxiliary at the former West Norwich Hospital. It was there that he met his wife, Lisa, who went on to qualify as a midwife at NNUH.

“We were both studying hard and there were times when I was close to giving up,” he admits. “Even so, we managed to get married and move into our first home, which would never have been possible without the secondment.”

Owen suffered a further setback when he discovered he had a latex allergy and needed to take time off for tests. When necessary, he now uses special gloves.

“People expected me to go into the police force, like my Dad, but nursing is in my blood – my nan, sister and cousin are all nurses and I love working with patients. I’m now on Dunston Ward, where I’m learning a lot about dermatology and the staff are really supportive and encouraging.”



SUE FITT, from Spixworth, was “just a mum” until she discovered a love of learning in her forties. She has now achieved a first class degree at the age of 45 – long after she left school with three O levels. Having worked as an auxiliary for more than 10 years, she was persuaded to study for an

NVQ in healthcare when the last of her three children started school. “To my surprise I finished the course in nine months and found I really enjoyed doing research and writing essays,” she says. “I was working in A&E at the time and Carol Edwards, the deputy nursing director, was determined that I should take my studies further. She even enlisted my husband’s help to persuade me to continue.”

By the time Sue switched from the diploma to the degree course, her two sons were also at university - but she was the first to achieve a first-class honours degree. “When I opened the letter, I started crying and my husband did, too. I couldn’t believe I’d got a first! I’d now like to be involved in nursing education myself and to be a role model for other nursing auxiliaries.”



EMMA WADE, 24, from Easton, always wanted to be a nurse, but when she embarked on a nursing degree course at Birmingham University she hated living away from home. She took a job as a nursing auxiliary at NNUH and eventually applied to the UEA ‘on the off-chance’ of getting a place.

“It’s definitely not an easy option because you are working shifts and writing essays while other students are out enjoying themselves,” she says. “However, I regard it as a real privilege to work with patients and you get a lot more respect from your colleagues once you are qualified.”

Emma says the financial support she received saved her from getting further into debt with student loans – she is delighted to have achieved her degree and is now determined to be a sister before she is 30.



KAMI HURREN, 27, is originally from the Czech Republic but settled in Norwich while travelling in the UK. She joined the old N&N as a nursing auxiliary and eventually applied for a secondment to study for a nursing diploma.

“I was the only non-English speaker on the course and had to work hard to keep up with the other students, even though I already had A levels from the Czech Republic,” she says. “Still, I am very determined when I decide to do something and the hospital was very supportive. In particular I am very grateful to Angela Fisher, an auxiliary nurse who encouraged me and took the time to explain things.”

Now living in Norwich, Kami is very happy with her achievement and has no regrets about leaving her homeland: “With cheap flights from Stansted I can get home quite regularly. In fact, there are lots of similarities between our two countries – the only things we have here that are not available at home are Yorkshire puddings and Mr Kipling’s apple pies!”



CATHY HOLLETT, 44, from North Walsham, says she has to keep pinching herself to believe she is a fully qualified nurse. She was a nursing auxiliary for

NICE



Proud to wear the 'blues': seconded staff nurses, from left: Jill Tennant, Emma Wade, Owen Watkinson, Cathy Hollett, Sue Fitt and Kami Hurren with deputy nursing director Carol Edwards

20 years before she began studying in her spare time.

"The sister at Cromer, Yvonne Ford, encouraged me to do an NVQ and that helped me to question not just what I was doing but *why* I was doing it, too. Now I feel I can offer a lot more to the patients because I have the knowledge to back up my practical skills. I'm working on Edgefield Ward and learning more about urology every day," says Cathy.

She admits it was hard work studying for her diploma while looking after a family and doing 12-hour shifts during placements at NNUH: "At one point my husband was doing a degree in aeronautical engineering and my son and daughter were revising for exams. Luckily the children learned to obey the 'Keep Out' sign on my door!"



JILL TENNANT, 33, joined the old N&N as a nursing auxiliary in 1992 and gained experience in orthopaedics, cardiography and A&E before taking up the chance of a secondment to the UEA.

She feels 'satisfied and very privileged' to have qualified at last with a diploma in nursing. "I'm not academic but the secondment gave me the support I needed to make progress in my career."

IT'S A WIDE WORLD

Ophthalmic surgeon Nick Astbury, outgoing president of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, explains why a project linking NNUH with a teaching hospital in Sudan could have far-reaching benefits for us all

IN OCTOBER I am planning to visit northern Sudan, together with colleagues from NNUH and the UEA, with a view to forging long-term professional links with Gezira University Hospital near Khartoum.

The visit follows an open meeting last October, when the idea of a link programme was greeted with a great deal of enthusiasm, not just among my hospital colleagues but from our own chief executive, Paul Forden, and chairman, David Prior.

So why Gezira University Hospital? The hospital had already approached the Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET) and the Royal College of Physicians with a view to enhancing their training and skills development. Encouraged by the response from NNUH, David Prior and I visited the Sudanese Ambassador, who welcomed our involvement. The next step is to find out exactly what is needed at Gezira so that we can respond accordingly.

The main requirement is likely to

"Links with overseas hospitals can help to motivate staff, as well as widen their experience and sharpen their skills "



You may be wondering why, in the current climate, we are venturing into a potentially dangerous country to offer help that would, at best, be just a drop in the ocean. Who has the time or the energy for such a project when our own NHS is so badly in need of resuscitation?

In fact, the NHS Executive is in favour of the idea as experience shows that professional partnerships with overseas hospitals can help to motivate staff, as well as widen their experience and sharpen their skills.

King's College Hospital in London, for example, has a link programme with a maternity hospital in Somaliland which has proved to be extremely rewarding on both sides. Money for the project is provided by charitable grants and donations, so there is no question of diverting NHS funds away from patient care. Also, those who take part in the project do so on a voluntary basis, often in their own holidays or when back-up can safely be provided without compromising patient care.

involve post-graduate education but it seems there could be opportunities for staff throughout our organisation, from clinicians and managers to technical and admin staff.

Having spent six months working in Botswana towards the end of my surgical training, and being involved with the National Links Programme, I am convinced there is much to be gained from helping those less fortunate than ourselves. Our involvement may appear relatively small, but the ripples can have far-reaching effects for us all.

• *NHS funds will not be used for this project or for our travelling costs. If you have any fundraising ideas and would like to get involved, please contact me by email: nick.astbury@nmu.nhs.uk*

The Viewpoint column is written from a personal perspective and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Trust. If there is a subject you feel strongly about, please send your contribution to Sue Jones, Editor, Communications dept. NNUH.

CAN YOU HELP US TO DEVELOP OUR SERVICES AT CROMER?



MANY THANKS to everyone who came to our fete last month. Glorious weather, combined with the large variety of stalls and excellent raffle prizes, resulted in more than £1,000 being raised for patients and staff - so thanks to all of you who came and enjoyed the day

The Renal Unit has finally opened (see below) and the difference this is making for local dialysis patients is enormous – just what the doctor ordered, in fact! Plans are also in place to open up the new radiology building, with its modern X-ray and ultrasound equipment.

Although there are still questions about the future use of our MRI scanner, it will be good to see patients benefiting from these new facilities. The 'old' X-ray Unit will continue to undertake the work required by the Minor Injuries Unit.

As we await news on the redevelopment of Cromer hospital, we are constantly reviewing our patient care and considering whether services provided at NNUH could be replicated at Cromer. If you have any ideas along these lines, please get in touch.

We are now producing our own version of *The Pulse* and the response to our first

issue was very encouraging. If you would like to receive a copy by email, please let me know.

Despite the general belief that staff at Cromer spend their lunch breaks down on the prom eating ice creams, this is definitely not true of me! Something always keeps me in the hospital all day, but perhaps I will manage to escape before the autumn.

Helen Lloyd

Service Manager, Cromer Hospital

Home from home for kidney patients

The first patients have now started dialysis at Cromer's new £1 million renal unit, which opened in June

SINCE SHE began dialysing at Cromer's new renal unit, Elizabeth Withers, from Overstrand, has been able to enjoy her garden for the first time in years: "Before, I was leaving home at 10am to get to Norwich and didn't return until after 6. Now I'm home in time to tend to my pots."

Elizabeth is one of the 'Langley Seaside's', the patients who have been dialysing at NNUH while they waited for the new unit to be built. It is now fully operational, with 50 patients taking their turn to use the eight dialysis stations from 7am - 10.30pm, Monday to Saturday. Their average age is 78.

"This is a nurse-led unit so the patients have to be stable and settled on dialysis," says senior sister Janet Dickenson. "There was a waiting list for Langley Ward but, so far, we have managed to accommodate everyone who wants to come here.



"One or two other residents have written to ask whether relatives with kidney failure could come to the unit while visiting North Norfolk; I am hoping that we may be able to arrange this with their own hospitals."

Janet has specialised in renal dialysis for 11 years and regards the patients as part of the family: "You get to know the patients very well - I've probably spent more time with them than my own parents!" she says.

The modular unit is surprisingly spacious and well-appointed, although some compromises were necessary - Janet's office doubles as a beverage bay and a side room



has to be sectioned off if a patient needs to be isolated.

The Friends of Cromer Hospital have generously donated ceiling-mounted televisions for each dialysis station, and a local art gallery has agreed to showcase local artists' work free of charge - giving patients the benefit of an ever-changing view as they wait to take their place on a dialysis machine.

Thanks are also due to Sagle Bernstein legacy, which enabled the new dialysis unit to be built.

HERE AT LAST:

patients Gerry Betts and Elizabeth Withers, (above right) with senior sister Janet Dickenson.

Staff in the new dialysis team include, from left: Jane Craske, Angie Webster, Mo Hunton and Andrea Barber



THE PULSE

Head of Communications, NNUH

Andrew Stronach (ext.3200)

Editor Sue Jones (ext.5944)

Pictures Medical Illustration and Sue Jones

Communications Officer

Hayley Gerrard (ext. 5821)

Please send your contributions for the October issue by 9 September